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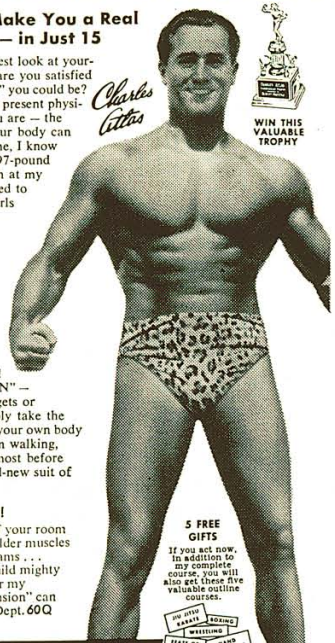

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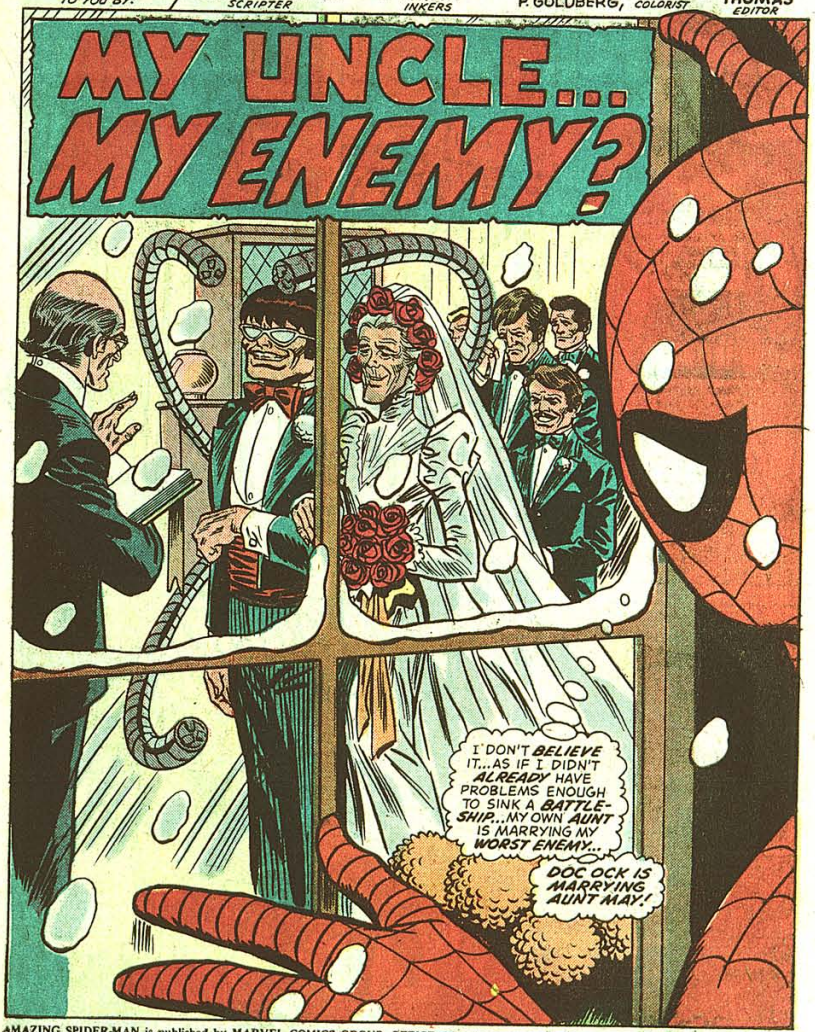
MY UNCLE... MY ENEMY?



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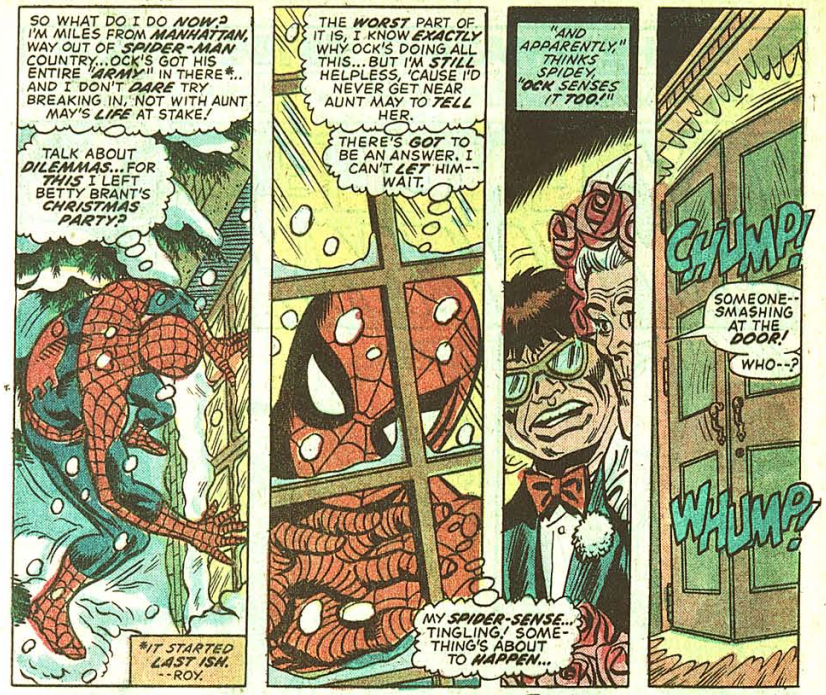

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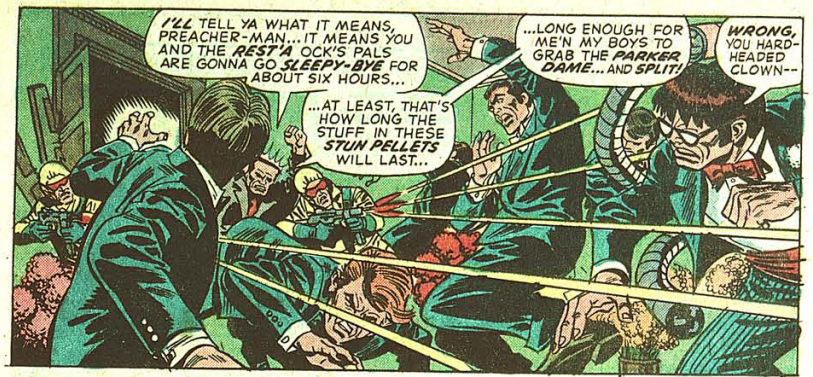

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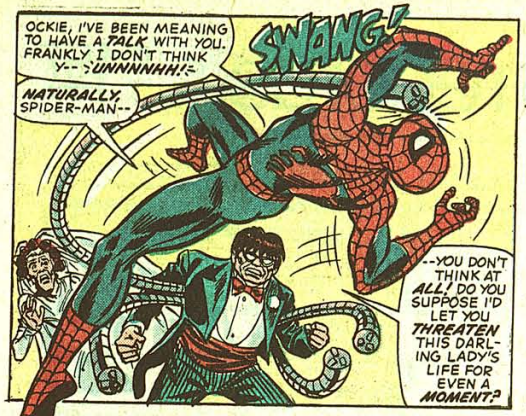

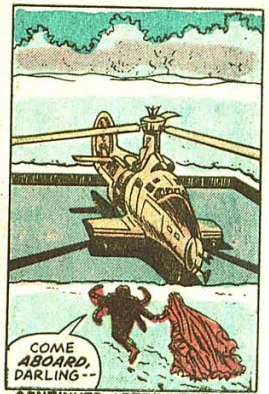

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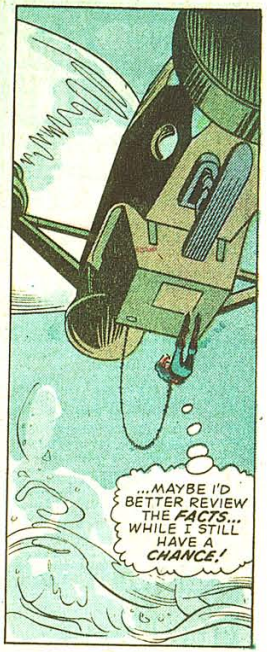

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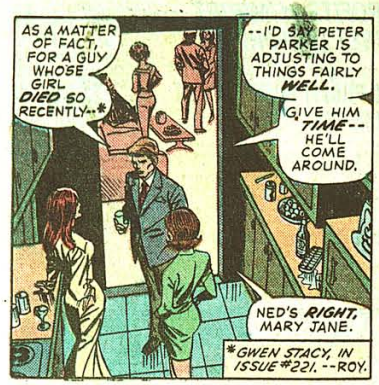

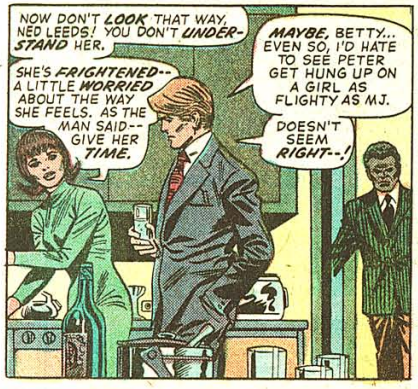

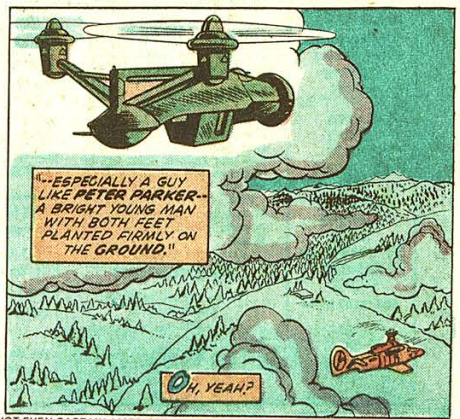

NOTHING CAN WITHSTAND THE HOWL OF THE BANSHEE— NOT EVEN CAPTAIN AMERICA!

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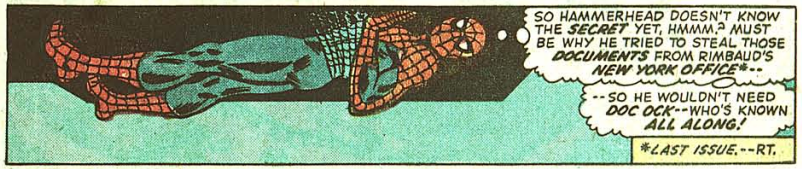

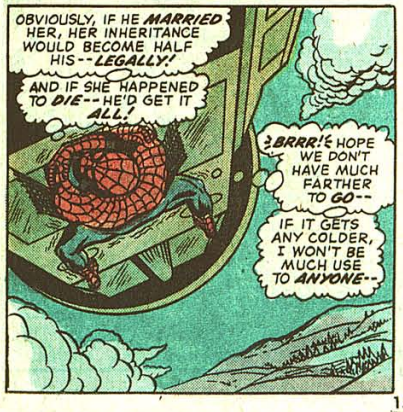

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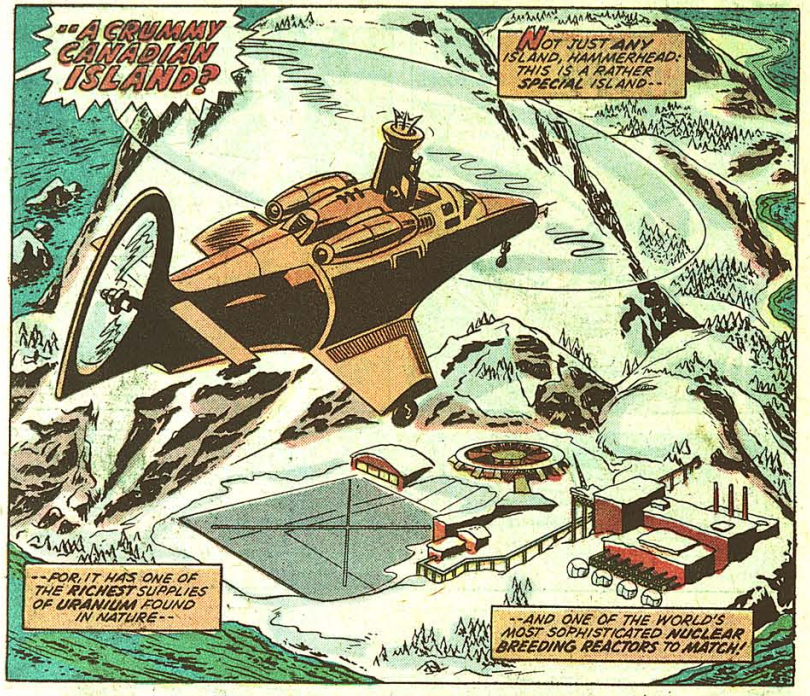

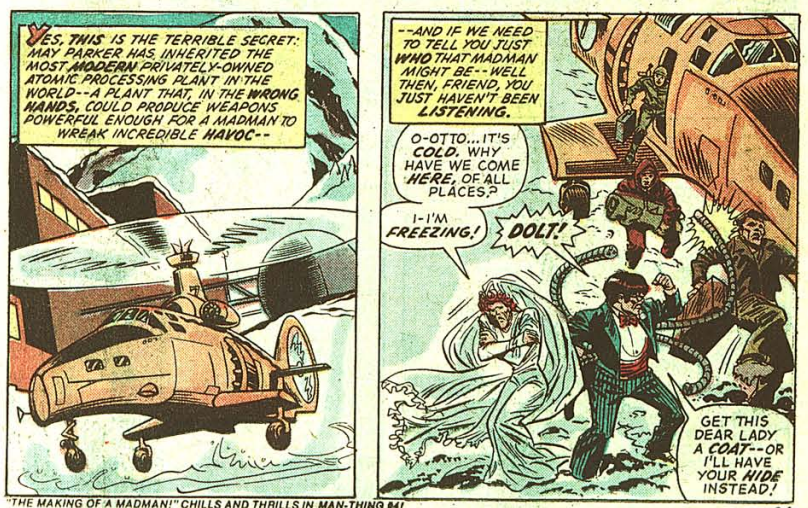

"THE MAKING OF A MADMAN!" CHILLS AND THRILLS IN MAN-THING #41

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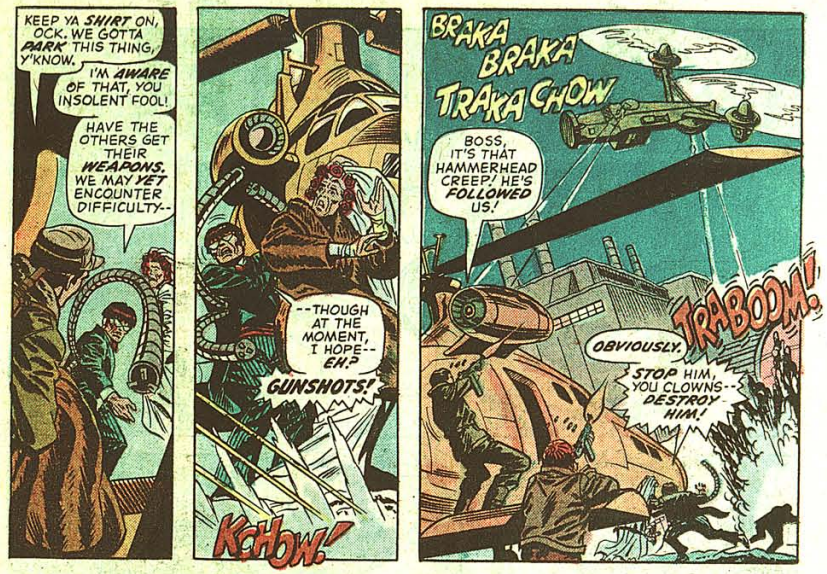

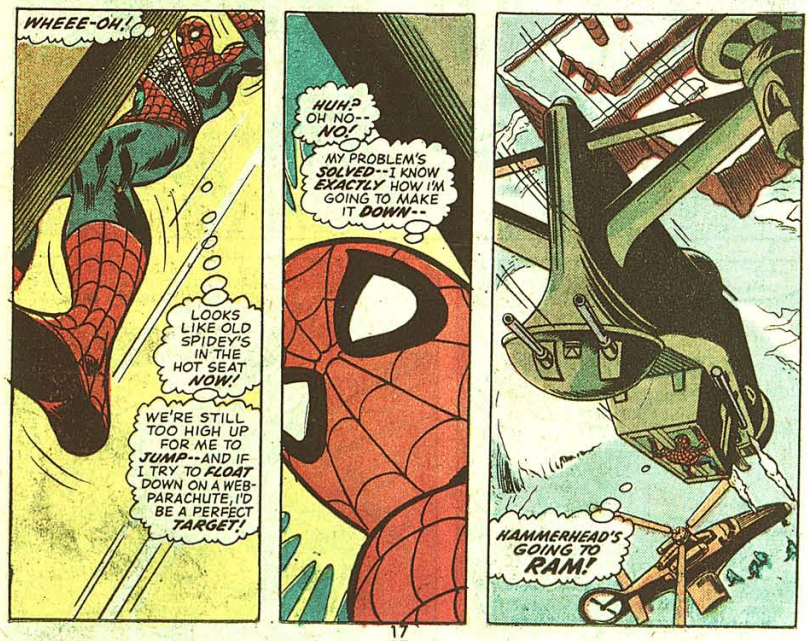

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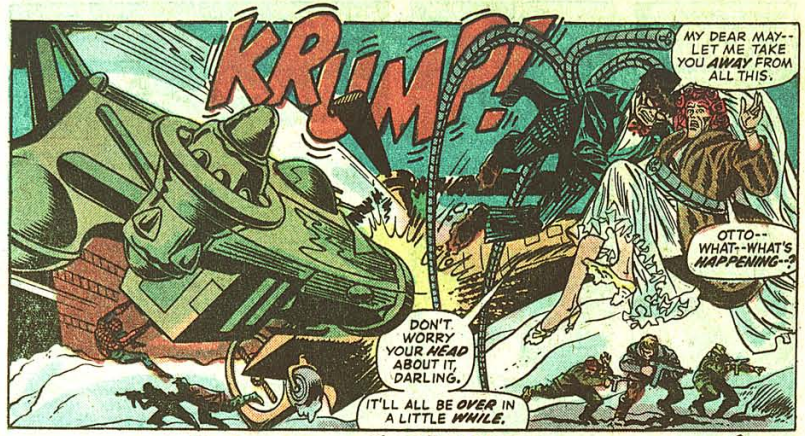

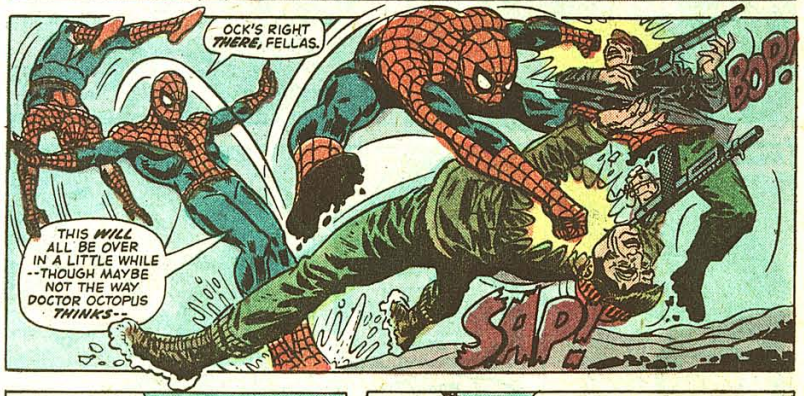

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THE SPIDER'S WEB

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:
THE MARVEL COMICS GROUP, SIXTH FLOOR 575 MADISON AV., NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022

Dear Bullpen:

SPIDER-MAN #127 had the usual good cover by Romita and an exceptional interior art job by Ross Andru. Hope they both keep it up.

It looks as though you've got a few new subplots coming in. Harry Osborn as the Goblin should be good for an issue or two (any more would probably mean a fan revolt), and Spidey calling Mary Jane "Gwendy". I hope you don't just ignore this last item; it should start M.J. thinking (either Peter is Spidey, or Spidey was trying to hustle Gwen from Peter, or something else?).

No matter what you do, you've got me hooked for good.

Bill Wormstedt
Box 482
Westport, Wash. 98595

Dear Spidey-Writers,

"The Dark Wings of Death" in SPIDEY #127 was great, superb, fantastic, and etc.! A super-baddie whom I've always liked. Lots of mystery, surprises, and everyday problems. The laughing, carefree, loveable Mary Jane involved with murder! The Spider-Mobile (which I'm dying to see completed) and the Human Torch. Harry Osborn following in his father's footsteps and becoming Green Goblin, Jr., And, speaking of surprises, Mary Jane almost killed as Gwen was. And, finally, Spidey supposedly falls to his death! And, mysterious women whom we need to know about. All I can say is: see ya next issue!

Tim O'Conner
50 Dolly Drive
Parsippany, N.J. 07054

And that, happily, is how most of the mail went on SPIDEY #127. Most of Marveldom's response could be measured in degrees of ecstasy, wonderment, or plain ol' good vibrations.

Bill, Tim, and all the rest of you who wrote... we thank you.

This is not to say that there weren't those who didn't like the mag, of course. And the common complaint of this minority of readers centered upon Ross Andru's depiction of the Web-Slinger: they hated it. Cries of "Bring Back Gil Kane!" resounded through their letters. Which we think—in our deranged way—is sort of amusing, considering all the "Bring Back John Romita!" letters we received when Gil took over the strip and the "Bring Back Steve Ditko!" letters that poured in when John took over the strip!

So, we'll just answer all those letters with this one sentence: give Ross a chance. You'll probably be writing "Bring Back Ross Andru!" letters if we replace him with_____. (Fill in the blank.)

Dear Marvel,

Please allow a longtime Marvelite to reflect a bit on the past. I remember:

(1) When the letters pages used to be two pages long.

(2) When a full Marvel Checklist appeared in each mag each month.

But before you send the Kingpin after me...I also remember:

(1) When there were no letters pages or checklists.

(2) When Marvel published eight beautiful mags a month. Now it is more like four times that many.

(3) When the art was good, instead of too beautiful for words, as it is now.

(4) When Marvel introduced an unusual foursome and a friendly neighborhood whatchamacallit which have evolved into revolutionary comic-mag institutions.

(5) When you brought out a black-and-white SPIDEY SPECTACULAR (which I would like to see come back--hint, hint!).

(6) Most of all I remember a beautifully small, overworked Bullpen, which ground out those monthly masterpieces.

Now, it is a larger overworked Bullpen. But the beauty is still there. Thank you.

Jim Rodgers
1517 Locust
Eldorado, Ill. 62930

Believe it or not, Jim, we're working now on a means of bringing back the two-page LP and the complete monthly Checklist, keep your fingers, toes, and eyes crossed, and maybe we'll succeed. Honestly, we miss 'em, too.

And, by the way, thanks for pointing out so eloquently that although some things have changed around the Merry Marvel Bullpen over the years, most of the upheaval has been for the best. We feel that way. And we feel even better things are on the way, now that we're past most of our growing pains. Just wait and see—and above all, don't stop believing! We're not getting older—we're getting weirder. (Or something like that.)

Dear Marvel,

I feel that you took the right and necessary step in SPIDER-MAN #121 and 122. Issues since then have been...well, okay. Ish #127, though, was a high-caliber one, and I'm glad to see that Peter is finally getting over Gwen's death.

Although I really liked John Romita and Gil Kane, I'm more than happy with Ross Andru's work! I think it'd be interesting if you ran a couple of issues with different artists such as: Barry Smith, Neal Adams, or Rich Buckler. Steranko would be great if you could get him away from FOOM.

SPIDER-MAN is one of my favorite mags, trailing behind CONAN, which follows the now-faltering DAREDEVIL. The only place, besides our real world, that I could put up without SPIDEY is on Counter-Earth! Bring back WARLOCK!!! Bring him back with Gil, or maybe Ross, or Rich Buckler, or Gene Colan, or Neal Adams or etc. He was Number One on my list.

Oh, yeah...you spelled Harry's last name Osborne instead of Osborn on the cover of SPIDEY #127. Is this something new?

Until Hulk grows a moustache, Make Mine Marvel and keep on' FOOMIN'!

The singer Dionne Warwick changed her name to Dionne Warwicke, we understand, for reasons of numerology—that occult science which converts letters to numbers, totals 'em up, and tells you whether you're going to live or die or get indigestion or fly to Denver on wings of denim. Maybe Harry just wanted to fly to Denver—for that one cover only. (Or more likely, our proofreaders goofed. And, in so doing, earned you a no-prize.)

But never mind that! What we wanna know is—what's this stuff about DAREDEVIL faltering, Chuck? We'll just have to assume you haven't seen the incredible, fantastic, mind-stunning masterworks that Steve Gerber and Bob Brown are turning out for that mag! (Steve insists we have to assume that.) Pick up next month's ish in which horn-head takes on the menace of Black Spectre and see if "faltering" still applies, huh?

Which reminds us...Gerry Conway, who just happens to author SPIDER-MAN, as well as FANTASTIC FOUR and THOR, is now also handling the scripting chores on another of Marvel's longest-running, most popular mags: SGT. FURY AND HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS! This one's a real departure for Gerard, and we think you'll get off on it too. It's the old-style FURY guts 'n' glory, now with mind-boggling Conway captions! Don't miss it!

'Nuff plugged! Keep thy webs untangled, and we'll see you here next month.

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STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Well, here it is — the start of a brand new year for all of us! It's the perfect time to clue you in on some of the fabulous, far-out projects in store for you from mighty Marvel, where wonders never cease — and where the future has never looked more exciting!

We don't have to tell you what a smash sensation our Spider-Man medallion coins have been — you're probably wearing one right now! But that's only the beginning! Every other product manufacturer seems to be discovering Marvel at the same time. So, in the coming year you'll be seeing more of our swingin' superhero gizmos than you can shake a spider-web at! But, that's just for starters — !

Even as I pen yon momentous monograph, Marvel's vast, world-wide network of legal experts (okay, so it's one over-worked lawyer with a scratchy pen) is in the process of signing a contract with one of America's largest and most famous book-publishing companies to do a series of hard-cover books about — you guessed it — your favorite Marvel masterworks! We'll tell you more in coming issues, and we hoodwink thee not — it'll herald a whole new world of reading excitement for all Marveldom Assembled — even for the few heretics who still may be at large!

Naturally, FOOM is still growing by leaps and bounds. Your batty Bullpen has just scheduled a special meeting to vote on all the new goodies and surprises in store for the Friends Of Ol' Marvel, may their luster never dim! And of course one of our zingiest new sensations is the Value Stamp project we've just begun — which Rascally Roy will discuss with you in living color — if I ever leave him enough space!

Since no mere mortal can bear too much mind-staggering munificence, I'll merely hint at some other dynamite developments to come. Wouldja believe a full-length feature film about some of our cataclysmic characters? And how about the two top TV producers who are making us an offer we can hardly refuse? And, we've gotta admit we're still sneakily working on plans for new, earth-shaking characters and concepts in our ever-growing line of Marvel comics and mags. So watch your newsstand, watch these pages, and watch out for enemy agents! We mustn't let a word of this reach the competition!

Excelsior!

Stan

ITEM! Sheesh! It's January again — and it seems like only yesterday that the whole batty Bullpen were auld-lang-syning each other at New Year's parties all over Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island too. Anyhow, just for the heck of it, we thought you might wanna see some of the *New Year's Resolutions* dreamed up by our nutty artists and writers for 1974. So here goes — !

Merry GERRY CONWAY resolves he'll take the time to memorize the agreement of all Asgardian pronouns and verbs. (He's got no choice! Rascally Roy stamped 'em all over Mr. C's forehead!)

Macabre MIKE PLOOG vows to make his new project, the Man-Thing, as horribly hairy and hellishly heinous as his Werewolf, Ghost Rider, and Frankenstein Monster put together.

RICH (Swash) BUCKLER pledges to make the Fantastic Four even more popular than it already is. (And you know something? The lad just might make it!)

Jazzy JOHNNY ROMITA swears he'll sneak away from his post as art director long enough to actually draw a Spider-Man saga or two, just for old times' sake.

STEVE (Baby) GERBER and Battlin' BOB BROWN jointly avow that they will both figure out every one of the gimmicks in Daredevil's billy-club before *1975* rolls around — they hope!

Big JOHN BUSCEMA promises to remember that a right-handed Barbarian wears his sword on his *left* side, not on his right.

Sibling SAL B. claims he'll get a new compass to help him draw those difficult, painstaking stripes on Captain America's shield.

Marvelous MARV WOLFMAN and Gentleman GENE COLAN affirm that they'll invent at least *three* unique and previously untried ways for Count Dracula to die! (Lotsa luck, fellas!)

Rascally ROY THOMAS declares that this year Conan will definitely go thru one whole issue without once referring to his Cimmerian god Crom. Or, if not *this* year, then maybe the *next* — !

And Smilin' STAN LEE, our publishing potenate, swears that this'll be positively the *last* year he lets his ever-lovin' editor make up New Year's Resolutions for the whole blamed Bullpen!

But now, onward — !

ITEM! We need a *breather*, people — honest! So many of you have been sending in for your full-fledged FOOM kits and all the other Marvel-type merchandise we've been offering you, that we've got to discontinue our ads for 'em for the next few weeks, just long enough to get caught up on all the mountains of mail that're piling up! That's just by way of letting you know that, if you're one of the few Marvelites who haven't yet signed up for membership in our FOOM fan club, you'll get your chance an ish or two from now. A word to the wise . . . !

ITEM! And now, in closing, here's our mirthful message in SPIDER-MAN CODE for the merry month of January — to warm the cockles of your heart with news of a Marvel longtimer who'll be getting his very own series in the months to come. Like so:

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Ponder over *that* little tidbit for a while, Straight Arrow!

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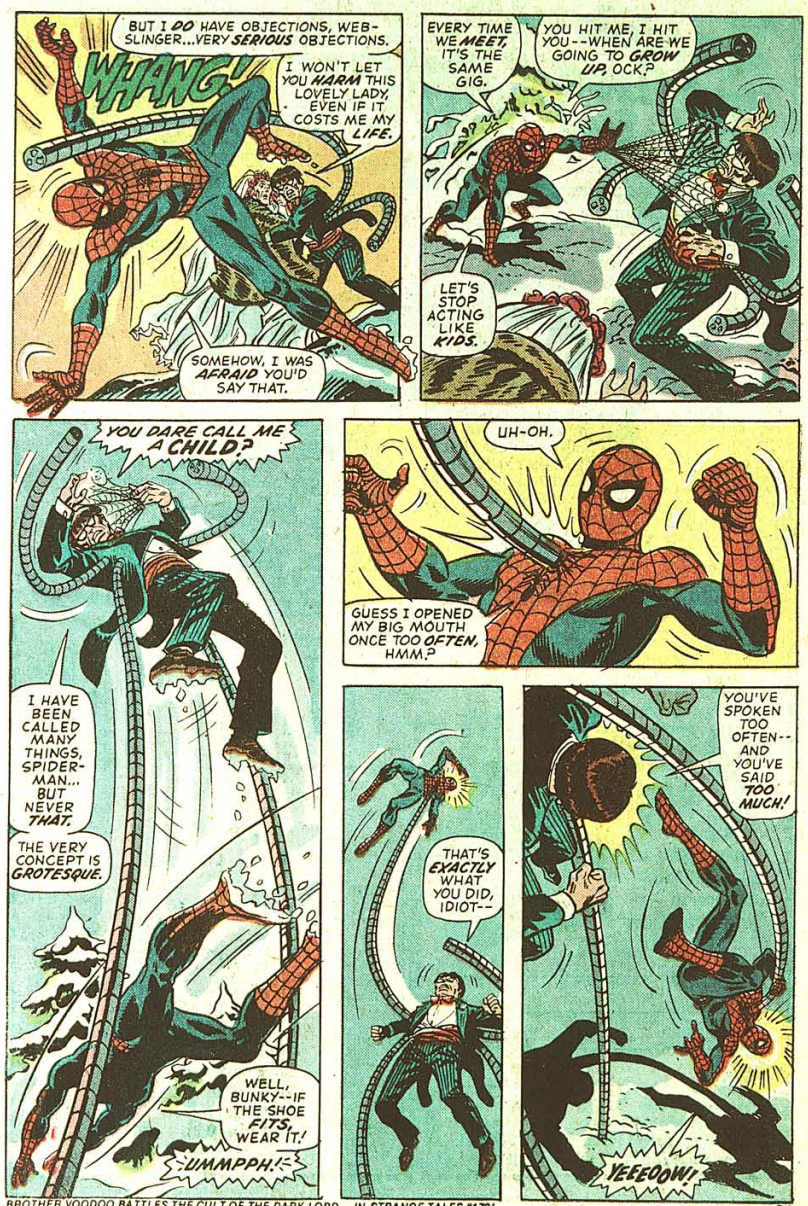

BROTHER VOODOO BATTLES THE CULT OF THE DARK LORD— IN STRANGE TALES #173!

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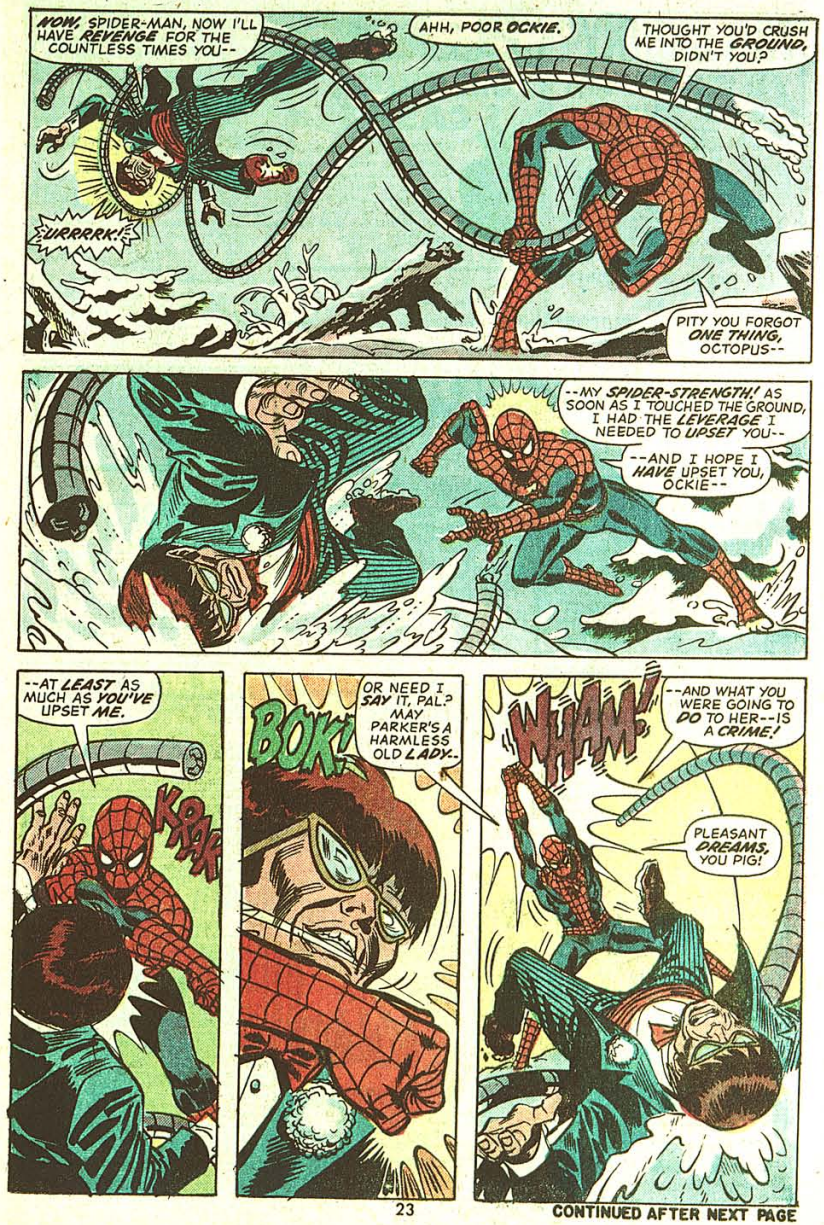

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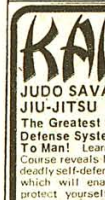

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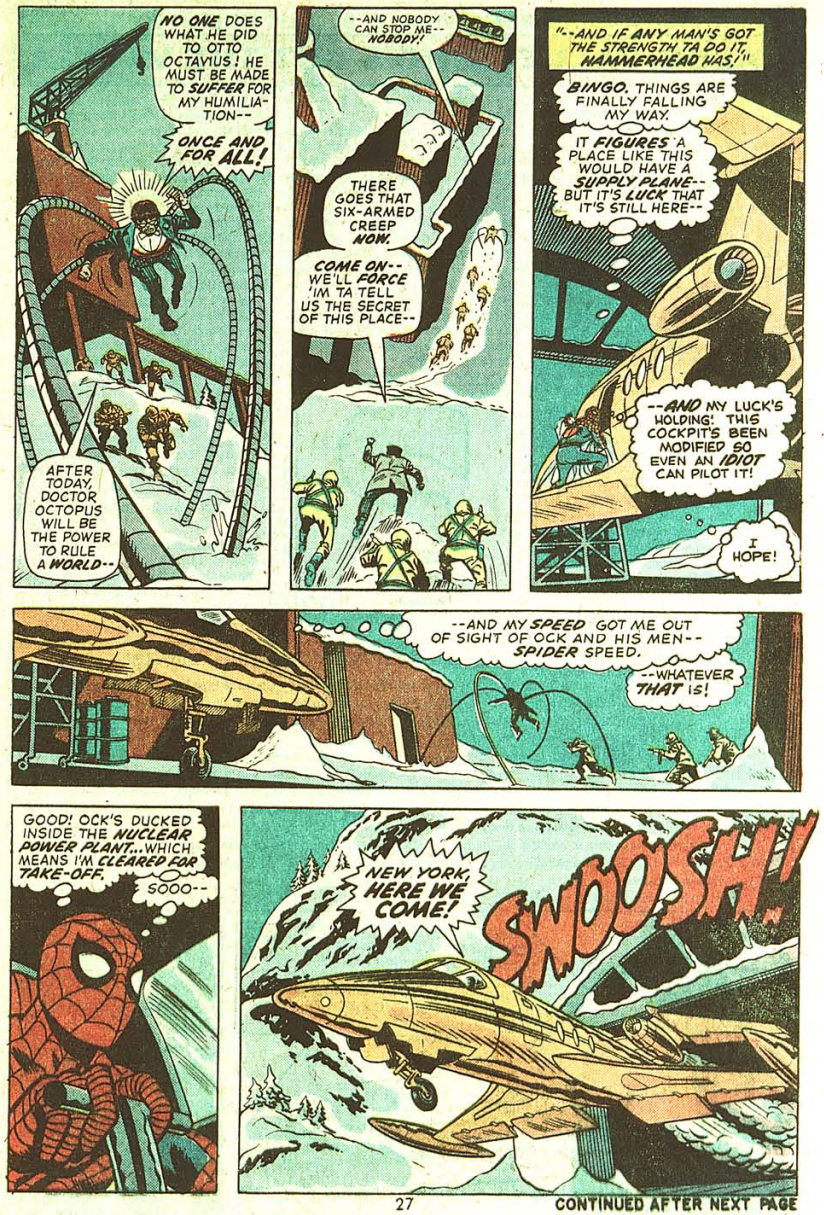

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PRESENTING—ANOTHER BOMBASTICALLY BUCOLIC BULLPEN BONUS PAGE!

VALUE, VALUE—WHO'S GOT THE VALUE?

Last time around, we first introduced our mighty MARVEL VALUE STAMPS to a breathlessly waiting world.

Now *this* month, it's finally time to *explain* the furshlugginer things!

What it is: We're now including one of these colorful MVS goodies in virtually every one of our multitudinous mags that has a *letters page*. There'll be an even *hundred* of them in Series "A," which covers calendar year 1974, starting with #1 (your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man, who else?) and winding up with #100, which sports a dynamic likeness of none other than—well, we'll let you guess till *next* time just *whose* mug will replace that mystery-shrouded *question mark* when the coveted #100 Stamp finally appears!

All we can tell you about it right now is that, although some of our Stamps will appear much more often than others, MVS #100 will be absolutely, positively the *rarest* one of 'em all, popping up in only *one* Marvel title during the whole blamed year!

(No, no, Suspicious One—it won't be sneaked into one of our western re-runs or *any* of our rhapsodic reprints, but will be featured prominently in one of our awesome *all-original* epics over the next few months. If you miss it, or one of the others which you need to complete your collecton—you can always do a bit of *swapping* and *trading* with your fellow Marvel madmen who might have been luckier, right?)

And now the $64,000 question: Once you've got all 100 Stamps, what do you *do* with them? We call 'em MARVEL VALUE STAMPS, after all—so where's the value?

Well, part of the future value of the whole collection is obvious. For instance, in the next month or three, we'll be offering you an *MVS Stamp Album* virtually at cost, so that you can paste in all of them and have a complete set—which is bound to become a real collector's item in the years to come. (After all, didja know that FANTASTIC FOUR #1 is now selling for up to $50 in many back-issue comic-book stores across the nation, and that SPIDEY #1 isn't far behind?)

But, that's only a *long-range* forecast. For those of you who'd like to see some benefits *before* you grow a long white beard, we can't say any more just now—but we solemnly promise that, even as these words are written, we're already in the process of lining up some *immediate* rewards you can reap when you've amassed a complete set. So, you'll not only have the frolic and fun of collecting the full 100 MVS mini-masterpieces, but—at least for many of you—it'll mean money in your pocket, to boot!

How's *that* for a grabber?

We also pledge a *fuller* explanation of this all-important point over the next few issues—verily, we swear and affirm it by the mile-long Adam's-apple of Reed Richards!

So keep on clippin' and collectin', pilgrim!

By the time summer rolls around, virtually all *100* MARVEL VALUE STAMPS will have appeared in our liltin' letters pages, or in some other designated spot—

—And that's when the fun *really* begins!

P.S.: Special thanks to Jazzy Johnny Romita, Mirthful Marie Severin, and Titanic Tony Mortellaro for digging up the spiffiest bunch of superhero drawings since George Washington first said "Cheese!"

FROM THE VALLEY OF THE (HO! HO! HO!) MARVEL GIANTS!

It's true! It's true! Our new mammoth-sized 75¢ mags are taking the world by storm! And no wonder! For one thing, last time we looked, they sported a full *eight pages more* than most of our major competitors' titles; for another, they feature a panorama of fear-filled photos from the greatest monster movies of all time. All this, plus art and story by some of the Bullpen's spookiest ghost-writers!

In fact, these mags are such a labor of love to produce that, in order to pore over each issue the way we really want to, we had to knock 'em all down to mere quarterly schedules for a while. But now, they're all *bimonthly* again!

That's right—as of now, you can pick up DRACULA LIVES, MONSTERS UNLEASHED, VAMPIRE TALES, and TALES OF THE ZOMBIE six times a year at your local nefarious newsstand. And CRAZY—the 40¢ humor-mag that dared to be dumb—will be on sale *seven* times a year, just to confuse and confound you!

What's more, in a couple of months we plan to launch *two more* jumbo-sized spectaculars—and, though they're on the top-secret list right now, we frankly think the very *names* of our two upcoming masterworks will knock you right out of your haunted castle!

Now, on to a pair of pulsating news-bits:

ITEM! The Crazy Crew tunes in "High Plains Drifter," "Last Tango in Paris," and "Soylent Green"—and tunes *out* "The Waltons"! Plus—"In Search of Ancient Auto-Nuts" and "The Rock'n'Rollin' Stone"! **CRAZY #3**—on sale Jan. 3!

ITEM! They're coming! The Snow Vampires! And they're not alone—for Satana, the Devil's Daughter, and Morbius the Living Vampire are right behind 'em! All this and more, in **VAMPIRE TALES #4**, on sale Jan. 29!

HAPPY NEW YEAR, HAUNTOPHILE!

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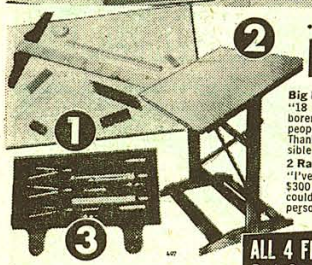

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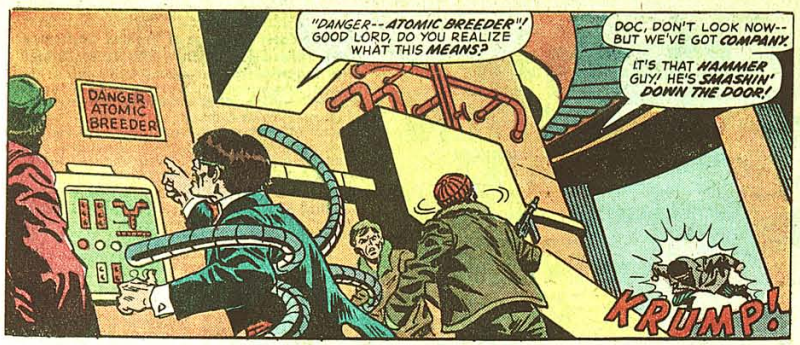

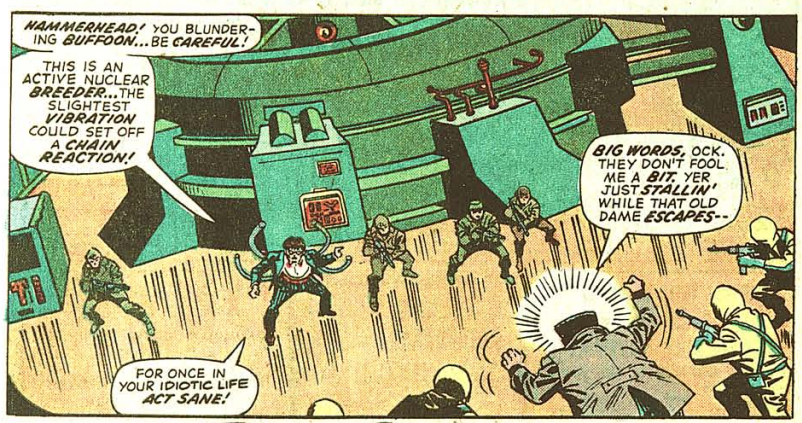

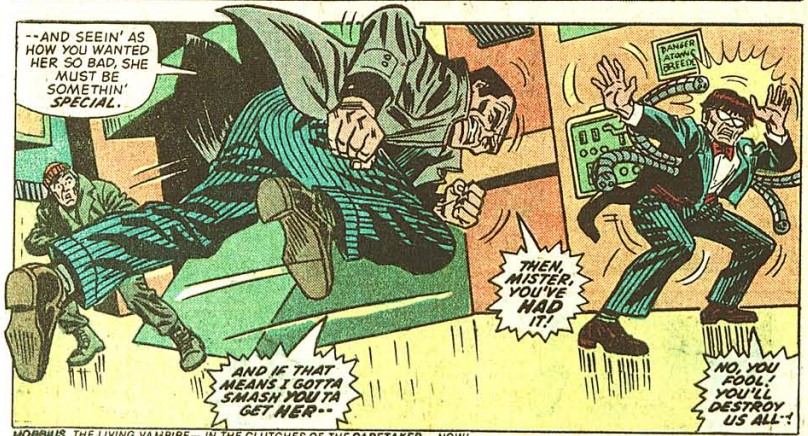

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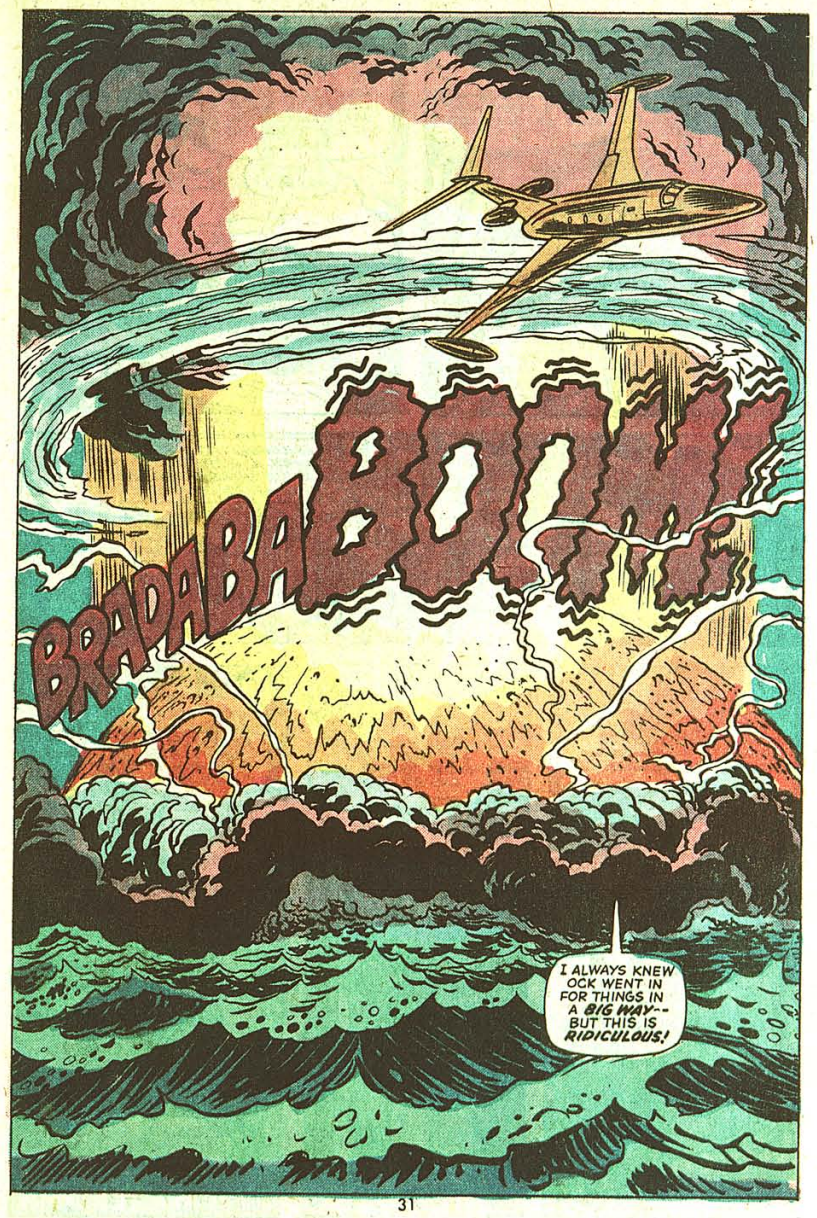

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